(a) whether Government have formulated any policy to expand these facilities through post offices or any other means to bring about communication revolution in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The Department has computerised 1,664 post offices in the country where traffic is heavy. All these post offices are located in urban areas. None of the rural post offices have been provided with either e-mail, Internet or computer facilities at present. A new product called e-Post based on Internet has been launched in 203 Head Post Offices in 5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra.

(b) to (d) Computerisation of post offices is based on traffic analysis and the likely return on investments thereof. Computerisation of urban post offices is taken in a phased manner as per the availability of funds and on approval from Planning Commission. There is no proposal at present to piovide Internet e-mail and computer facilities to rural post offices in the country.

Categories of telephone users

5280. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(c) whether Government propose to create 17 categories of telephone users which would be branded as commercial;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the commercial users would now have to pay an additional amount of Rs. 60 per month as rent and the number of free calls would be limited to 30;

(f) if so, since when and the reasons therefor;

(g) whether Government propose to impose an additional levy on the residential phones too; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Sir, no such proposal is under consideration of the Government at present.

(a) Yes, Sir. As per TRAI's 20th Amendment to the Telecom Tariff Order, 99 issued on 14.3.2002, the commercial subscribers, both urban and rural, are to be charged higher rental ranging between Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 and monthly free calls are to be lowered to 45 in case of rural commercial subscribers and 30 in case of urban commercial subscribers.

(b) The decision to implement depends upon individual operators.

(e) and (f) No such proposal is pending for consideration of the Government.

Agreements with South Korea In IT sector

5281. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has signed two agreements with South Korea for closer co-operation in Information Technology sector; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and South Korea in April, 2001 for cooperation in the following areas:

(i) IT software including telecom software

(ii) IT enabled services

(iii) E-commerce and Information security

(iv) Electronic governance

(v) IT and Electronics Hardware

(vi) HRD and IT education and IT enabled education